

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 SAJ-01 OMB-01 NIC-01 DRC-01

/140 W

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R 121520Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9229

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 17874

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, GW, PFOR, CZ

SUBJECT: THERE IS NO JOY IN BONN OVER FRG/CZECHOSLOVAK
SETTLEMENT

REF: BONN 16963

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SUMMARY: THE SIGNING OF THE FRG-CZECH NORMALIZATION

TREATY IN PRAGUE DECEMBER 11 HAS BROUGHT NONE OF THE SENSE OF DRAMA THAT ACCOMPANIED THE CONCLUSION OF THE EARLIER EASTERN TREATIES. THERE IS IN FACT A FEELING OF ANTI-CLIMAX IN BONN: THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRAGUE IN RECENT MONTHS WERE TOO INFLEXIBLE, THE RESULTS TOO UNPROMISING, AND THE ENTIRE RELATIONSHIP IS BEGINNING ON A SOUR NOTE. NOR DO OUR SOURCES HERE SEE MUCH PROSPECT OF EARLY IMPROVEMENT. ANY MOVEMENT IN THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS FACING THE FRG IN ITS OSTPOLITIK WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO AWAIT BRANDT'S VISIT TO MOSCOW NEXT MONTH, AND EVEN THEN OUR CONTACTS EXPECT LITTLE THAT WILL BE OF LONG-RANGE BENEFIT TO THE FRG. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SIGNING OF THE TREATY IN PRAGUE DECEMBER 11 NORMALIZING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRG AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA MARKS THE LAST SIGNIFICANT STEP IN BRANDT'S OSTPOLITIK. THE FORTHCOMING TALKS AIMED AT SETTling WEST GERMANY'S RELATIONS WITH HUNGARY AND BULGARIA ARE FAR LESSER EVENTS SINCE THEY DO NOT INVOLVE THE HEAVY HISTORICAL PROBLEMS WHICH PERTAINED IN THE EFFORTS TO SETTLE RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW, WARSAW, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, OR EVEN EAST BERLIN.

2. SO, 35 YEARS AFTERWARDS, THE MUNICH PACT HAS BEEN DECLARED INVALID. BUT THE SENSE OF DRAMA AND OF HAVING TAKEN A MAJOR HISTORICAL STEP, SUCH AS WAS EVIDENT AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE EASTERN TREATIES TWO YEARS AGO, IS ENTIRELY ABSENT IN BONN. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE EVENT HAS BEEN FACTUAL AND UNINSPIRED, AND EDITORIAL COMMENT LIMITED.

3. PART OF THIS LACK OF EXCITEMENT IS DUE TO THE GENERAL FEELING THAT OSTPOLITIK HAS, BY AND LARGE, ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED AND THAT THESE LATEST MANIFESTATIONS OF IT ARE INSIGNIFICANT ADDENDA. PART OF IT RESULTS FROM THE OFF-AGAIN ON-AGAIN HAGGLING INVOLVED IN REACHING A SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES AND IN ARRANGING, CANCELING, THEN RE-ARRANGING BRANDT'S VISIT TO THE CZECH CAPITAL. PART OF IT STEMS FROM THE WIDE-SPREAD FEELING HERE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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UP ON AN ISSUE OF PRINCIPLE (WEST BERLIN LEGAL ASSISTANCE) WITHOUT OBTAINING ANY CONCESSIONS FROM THE CZECHS OR ASSURANCES THAT THE ISSUE WOULD BE HANDLED SATISFACTORILY LATER.

4. FINALLY, PART OF THE LACK OF DRAMA COMES FROM THE KNOWLEDGE AMONG MOST BONN OBSERVERS, BOTH IN THE GOVERNMENT AND IN THE NEWS MEDIA, THAT THE OSTPOLITIK IS

NOT BRINGING THE MILLENIUM IN TERMS OF FRG RELATIONS WITH THE EAST. THE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF BERLIN, ETHNIC GERMANS' RESETTLEMENT, EE DEMANDS FOR COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF NAZISM ALL REMAIN, AND THEY WILL BE THE OBJECT OF CONTINUING DISPUTE AND STRAIN FOR YEARS TO COME. HENCE, THE ATMOSPHERE IN BONN FOLLOWING THE NEWS FROM PRAGUE IS ALMOST ANTI-CLIMACTIC. FEW PEOPLE SEEM TO CARE AND THOSE WHO DO TEND TO VIEW THE AFFAIR QUITE SOURLY, NOT LEAST BECAUSE IT IS CLEAR THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DID NOT EXCEL IN ITS HANDLING OF THIS RECENT PHASE OF EASTERN POLICY.

5. WE ARE TOLD BY INFORMED FONOFF CIRCLES HERE THAT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 17874

BRANDT AND SCHEEL ARE AWARE OF THE GENERAL SOURNESS
PREVALENT THROUGHOUT MUCH OF THE GERMAN POLITICAL
SPECTRUM. THE TWO LEADERS REPORTEDLY TOOK THE DECISION
TO GO AHEAD, NONETHELESS, SIMPLY TO TRY TO CLEAR UP THE
REMAINING ELEMENTS OF THE EASTERN POLICY AND, PERHAPS
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AS IMPORTANT, TO TRY TO SILENCE THE WEHNER-LED SPD
CRITICS OF THE OSTPOLITIK'S RECENT STAGNATION. BUT
BRANDT CUT BACK THE LENGTH OF HIS VISIT TO PRAGUE TO
SHOW THE CZECHS HIS PIQUE OVER THE DIFFICULTIES CREATED
IN THE LAST MONTHS. IN DOING SO, HE MANAGED TO AVOID
A TRIP TO THE CZECH TOWN OF LIDICE, THE SITE OF A NAZI
ATROCITY IN WORLD WAR II, A TRIP HE HAD PREVIOUSLY
AGREED TO DE*PITE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CONTRARY FROM
MANY OF HIS ADVISERS.

6. THE FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT OF FRG/CZECH DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS IS THEREFORE BEGINNING, IN OUR SOURCES' VIEW,
IN A THOROUGHLY POOR ATMOSPHERE. NOR DO THE GERMANS
EXPECT THE RELATIONSHIP TO SHOW ANY REAL SIGNS OF
IMPROVEMENT SOON, MAINLY BECAUSE THE SOVIETS, WITH THE
HELP OF OR PRESSURE FROM THE GDR, ARE KEEPING THE
CZECHS AND OTHER EES FIRMLY IN LINE. ONE SENIOR FONOFF
REP TOLD US THAT THE GERMANS HAVE TOLD THE SOVIETS AT A
HIGH LEVEL THAT THE RECENT CHICANERIES BY THE CZECHS
AND OTHERS OVER BERLIN WERE CREATING A POTENTIALLY
DANGEROUS CLIMATE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC FOR THE FRG'S
RELATIONS WITH THE EES. THE FONOFF DOES NOT EXPECT
THIS WARNING TO HAVE MUCH IMMEDIATE EFFECT, HOWEVER: IT
EXPECTS RATHER THAT THE SOVIETS WILL KEEP ANY CONCES-
SIONS THEY MIGHT BE WILLING TO MAKE UNTIL BRANDT MAKES
HIS VISIT TO MOSCOW NEXT YEAR. AT THAT POINT, THE
GERMANS EXPECT BRANDT WILL HAVE TO PAY FAIRLY HEAVILY
IN TERMS OF CREDITS FOR ANY SOVIET CONCESSIONS,
AND MOST OBSERVERS DO NOT BELIEVE BRANDT WILL COME AWAY
WITH MANY OF THOSE.

7. COMMENT: IT IS WORTH MAKING THE POINT, SINCE IT IS
ONE MADE TO US FREQUENTLY HERE THESE DAYS, THAT BRANDT'S

PROBLEM WITH OSTPOLITIK OR EVEN WITH FOREIGN POLICY
GENERALLY IS THAT PEOPLE ARE LESS INTERESTED IN SUCH
THINGS THESE DAYS THAN THEY WERE IN THE RECENT PAST.
THE ATTENTION OF MUCH OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE POPULA-
TION IS FOCUSED EVER MORE INTENSIVELY ON DOMESTIC
PROBLEMS, MOST OF THESE RELATED IN ONE WAY
ANOTHER TO THE ENERGY SHORTAGE (E.G. THE PROSPECTS OF
UNEMPLOYMENT AND INCREASING INFLATION). FOREIGN
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POLICY, UNLESS IT IS DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH THE ENERGY
CRISIS, THEREFORE RECEIVES SHORT SHRIFT EXCEPT FROM
BRANDT AND SCHEEL, BOTH OF WHOM SEEM MORE INTENT ON
ESCAPING INTO THE REALMS OF FOREIGN POLICY THAN CON-
FRONTING, AS THE LEADERS OF THE COALITION PARTIES, THE
PRESSING ISSUES FACING THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AT HOME.
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